

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 13, 2006

The Honorable Donald Rumsfeld  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Defense  
The Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld

We are writing to you in opposition to the Army's plans for force structure changes affecting the Army National Guard. We are tremendously concerned that these proposed changes could have negative long-term impacts on the Pennsylvania Army National Guard (PAARNG) and their ability to perform state and federal missions.

We are deeply troubled by any plan that will reduce the number of combat brigades in the Army National Guard from 34 to 28. We understand that the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Report, released on February 6, 2006, showed a requirement for only 28 such brigades in the Guard. However, we are concerned that such findings are short-sighted and our nation's need for these units has certainly not diminished.

The Army has promised that, in "rebalancing the force," it will replace these combat brigades with combat service support brigades and other units. The loss of six combat brigades will diminish combat capabilities and certain equipment of the Army National Guard that is necessary in national and state responses. Pennsylvania will lose five battalion-size units, which regularly work as a combat force. Four of these units are trained for street civil disturbance missions and non-standard requirements such as providing security for large scale events. Changing these units also increases the difficulty to provide protection to three of our five nuclear facilities in the Commonwealth. Support units generally lack the tactical skill sets, security training, and operational capabilities of combat brigades, and this will degrade their ability to respond to civil disturbance actions.

The record of the Pennsylvania National Guard clearly demonstrates the need for combat brigades. Currently, our 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team (BCT) is serving a one-year deployment in Iraq; more than 3,300 of the 3,700 members of the 55<sup>th</sup> BCT have deployed in the Global War on Terror; and our 56<sup>th</sup> Stryker BCT deployed more than 2,500 soldiers to the Gulf coast on short notice in response to Hurricane Katrina. Since September 11, 2001, the PAARNG has deployed over 10,600 soldiers in support of the Global War on Terror. In addition, they perform peacekeeping missions on a recurring basis in Bosnia and Kosovo.

It appears that the Army proposals are evolving rapidly, and we urge you to work closely with the Congress on this matter. Thank you again for your consideration of our request. Please do not hesitate to let us know if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Sincerely,



Arlen Specter  
United States Senate



Rick Santorum  
United States Senate



Curt Weldon  
U.S. House of Representatives



Tim Holden  
U.S. House of Representatives



John E. Peterson  
U.S. House of Representatives



Paul E. Kanjorski  
U.S. House of Representatives



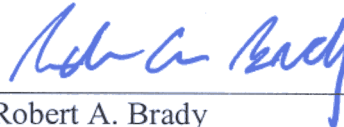
Melissa A. Hart  
U.S. House of Representatives



Michael F. Doyle  
U.S. House of Representatives



Bill Shuster  
U.S. House of Representatives



Robert A. Brady  
U.S. House of Representatives



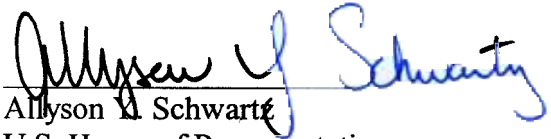
Don Sherwood  
U.S. House of Representatives




Chaka Fattah  
U.S. House of Representatives



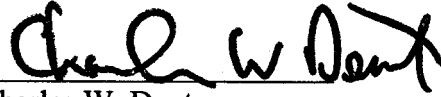
Todd Russell Platts  
U.S. House of Representatives



Allyson A. Schwartz  
U.S. House of Representatives



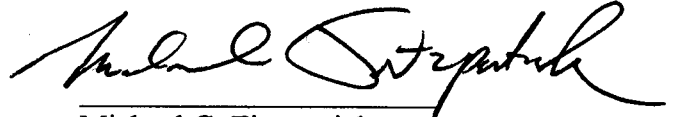
Jim Gerlach  
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Charles W. Dent  
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Tim Murphy  
U.S. House of Representatives



Michael G. Fitzpatrick  
U.S. House of Representatives



Joseph R. Pitts  
U.S. House of Representatives



Phil English  
U.S. House of Representatives